

*Testimony to the Health & Hospitals Subcommittee of The Appropriations Committee
by Barry M. Simon, for CCPA & Gilead Community Services, Inc.*

H.B. No. 6380 AN ACT CONCERNING THE BUDGET FOR THE BIENNIUM ENDING JUNE 30, 2013.

March 2, 2011

Good evening Senator Harp, Representative Walker, and members of the Committee. My name is Barry Simon and I am the Executive Director of Gilead Community Services and Past president of the CCPA Board. Gilead Community Services is a mental health provider funded by DMHAS and DCF that serves almost 600 individuals throughout Middlesex County and The Connecticut Community Providers Association (CCPA) represents organizations that provide services and supports for people with disabilities and significant challenges including children and adults with substance use disorders, mental illness, developmental, and physical disabilities. Community providers deliver quality health and human services to 500,000 of Connecticut's residents each year. We are the safety net.

Community providers are an integral part of the public/private partnership in the Purchase of Service Community healthcare system. We are the safety net that helps people live as full a life as possible. But unfortunately, at the same time the State asks us to deliver these services, it often fails to give us the funding or the backing we need to deal with the added administrative and legal costs associated with the constant barrage of new or existing mandates. Our clients need the services we offer in order to live more productive, fulfilling and healthy lives. The services we provide are essential services and as we use more resources for administrative burden then there are less direct service deliver to our clients...eventually there are significant consequences.

The community provider system is a cost effective means of providing vital services that are an integral part of the core mission of government. I am here today on behalf of my clients, my incredible staff (part of which are 1199 union staff) and hundreds of thousands of individuals served by the community provider system to ask that you look to strengthening the community provider system as a way of addressing aspects of the growing fiscal crisis and provide needed relief to the burden of more regulation and the rising cost of doing business. I am here to tell you that we provide excellent care to our clients that saves the State money as an alternative to more costly and restrictive levels of care.

Community providers deliver services to over 500,000 of the state's most needy residents. Local agencies in all of your districts continue to witness under funding and increasing regulatory burden, yet everyday families, individuals and our State turn to us, at increasing rates, for the support they need to help individuals lead more productive, healthy and fulfilling lives.

Now, is a critical moment in time, higher costs, more regulation, and the lack of state support mean program and service reductions at the very moment we should be looking for less costly and more productive alternatives. The draft data from Commission on Nonprofit Health and Human Services shows a system at risk. Non-profit community providers are part of the solution for the future of the service delivery system. We are and will continue to be a cost-effective solution to addressing the growing needs of Connecticut's most vulnerable citizens. The 500,000 Connecticut residents that use community services need you to help fix this systemic problem before it becomes their healthcare crisis. Given adequate support, we have the capacity and willingness to provide these needed services; which saves the State money, provides people with independence, creates jobs, and brings in federal matching funds.

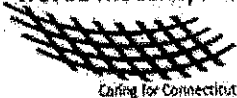
As you know, there was no COLA increase for the past 3 years and the current budget proposes flat funding for another two. Five years of no increase for any state funded community provider contracts, coupled with decades of inadequate COLAs, (see attached) simply does not address our ever increasing operating costs and has forced providers to reduce services. As healthcare providers our costs continue to rise and we need your help in providing relief to our already overstretched budgets. The Expanded Medicaid/ LIA/ ABD / FFS Populations will impact co-pays and consumer access to care, impact of co-pays will effect provider reimbursement, and there needs to be provisions to assure that Medicaid rates reflect inflation.

I challenge you to look creatively and go further to support the foundational community-based services and the preventative role that we play in order to create a sustainable system. You know that funding issues create staffing issues. You know that when those with mental illness do not receive proper treatment they are likely to end up in emergency rooms, prisons or more expensive and less appropriate residential settings like nursing homes, thus costing the State even more money. Community Providers are part of the solution for the future of the service delivery system and preserving the investment made in quality, cost effective, community care.

Please help the Community service providers in your community succeed by supporting a budget that allows community providers to offer quality affordable services.

I thank you for your time and would be happy to answer any questions.

We Are The Safety Net



Caring for Connecticut

Compounded COLA vs. Compounded CPI and Medical CPI FY1987-FY2013

